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Preface

Norman Lloyd Johnson

Norman Johnson was born on January 9, 1917, in Ilford, Essex, England, and passed away on November 18, 2004, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA. He had an illustrious career which, over a span of six and a half decades, produced numerous pioneering and valuable contributions to the field of Statistics. These contributions came in a variety of forms including as a scholar, researcher, educator, author, editor, teacher, mentor, and administrator. In him, the statistical world has lost a doyen!

After passing the High Schools Examination in 1934 from a county high school in Ilford, Essex, Norman Johnson went to University College London on a scholarship and completed a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics in 1936, at a young age of 19. He then joined the Department of Applied Statistics and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in 1937. Continuing this line of study, he completed his Master's Degree in 1938 after writing a Master's thesis under the supervision of Jerzy Neyman. Subsequently, he joined the same Department as an Assistant Lecturer on an invitation by Egon Pearson, the then Chairman of the Department of Applied Statistics.

After a year, the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 interrupted his academic career, with him working during the war as Experimental Officer with the Ordnance Board. After the war ended, he rejoined the Statistics Department at University College London, and then finished his Ph.D. in 1948. His Ph.D. dissertation was on the Johnson system of distributions which resulted in his famous 1949 *Biometrika* paper [2] on this theme. In the 1950s, he authored several papers jointly with Florence David and these covered such diverse topics as order statistics, discrete distribution theory, censored sampling, approximations to distributions, series expansions, probability integral transformations, and tests of hypotheses based on order statistics. Following his early interests in actuarial statistics, he also wrote the examinations of the Institute of Actuaries and became a Fellow of this Institute. Subsequently, he wrote a two-volume textbook on Statistics, jointly with H. Tetley, at the invitation of the Institute of Actuaries [14].

With this book attracting the attention of George Nicholson, the then Head of the Department of Statistics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Norman Johnson spent the year 1952–1953 in Chapel Hill as a result of an invitation from George Nicholson. This resulted in his permanent move to Chapel Hill in 1962. He got married to Regina C. Elandt-Johnson in 1964, whom he met in 1958 at University College London, where she was as a post-doctoral visitor. She subsequently moved to Chapel Hill and joined as a faculty member in the Department of Biostatistics.

Interestingly, on his first day at the University of North Carolina in September 1962, he met, on his way to lunch, Samuel Kotz—for whom it was the first day there as well, as a post-doctoral fellow. Their collaboration, which commenced on this day purely by chance, lasted for the next

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four decades, producing 14 books/monographs and in addition a nine-volume *Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences* (co-edited with Campbell Read [17]). Noteworthy among these are the four volumes on *Distributions in Statistics* published in 1969–1972 [5–7] (revisions of these volumes were published in the 1990s, one jointly with Adrienne Kemp [9,4] and four with N. Balakrishnan [10–12,15]) and a classic book on *Urn Models and Their Applications* in 1977 [8]. The nine-volume set of the *Encyclopedia* has also been revised recently by S. Kotz, N. Balakrishnan, C.B. Read and B. Vidakovic and published as a 16-volume set, in 2006 [16]. In addition to these, Norman Johnson also co-authored a two-volume textbook on *Statistical and Experimental Design in Engineering and the Physical Sciences* with Fred Leone in 1964 [13], and a book on *Survival Models and Data Analysis* with Elandt-Johnson in 1980 [1].

During his illustrious career, Norman Johnson collaborated with numerous researchers including such eminent statisticians as E.S. Pearson, F.N. David, B.L. Welch, J. Grizzle and I.W. Burr, and published over 180 papers in prestigious journals. He supervised 16 Ph.D. students, many of whom went on to establish great careers in Statistics. He acted as Chairman of the Department of Statistics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, for six years from 1971 to 1976 and took retirement in 1982. Even after his retirement, he was very active and productive, publishing several papers and books, and also editing the first edition of the *Encyclopedia* with S. Kotz and C.B. Read.

For his pioneering work and many valuable contributions to the field of Statistics, he received many awards and honors including *Fellow of the American Statistical Association*, *Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics*, *Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries (London)*, the *Shewhart Medal* awarded by the American Society for Quality Control, and the *Wilks Award* from the American Statistical Association.

My own association with Norman Johnson started in 1980 when he served as an External Examiner for my Ph.D. Thesis submitted at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and then quite closely in 1990s while working on the revision of four volumes on *Distributions in Statistics* with Samuel Kotz. Norman and I edited a volume together in 1997 to celebrate the 65th birthday of Samuel Kotz [3], and our collaboration continued right until his death when he was giving valuable advice and suggestions during the preparation of the 16-volume set of the revision of the *Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences*.

Those who knew Norman Johnson as closely as I did not only admired him for the fine academic that he was and the wealth of knowledge that he possessed, but also for the kind, generous, gentle, soft-spoken and humble person that he was!

It is, therefore, with great respect and admiration that I dedicate this Special Issue to the memory of Norman Johnson, a true giant in the field of Statistics.

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N. Balakrishnan*
McMaster University,
Canada
E-mail address: bala@mcmaster.ca

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* Corresponding address: McMaster University, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S 4K1.